

REMARKS

The pending Office Action has been carefully considered. Twenty claims are pending in this application numbered 1-20. Claims 1, 5, 6, 13, 14 and 18 are independent. Claims 1-4 depend on claim 1; claim 7-13 depend on claim 6; and claims 15-19 depend on claim 14. No claims are dependent on claims 5 and 13. Claims 1, 2, 3, 5-7, 12-14, 16 and 18 have been amended. Claims 4, 8-11, 15, 17, 19 and 20 have not been amended.

The present invention as amended in the independent claims 1, 5, 6, 13, 14 and 18 is directed to an ostomy coupling that includes two coupling pieces and a split ring locking member. The locking member is deformable. It can expand and it can resiliently contract. It deforms into an expanded state when the two coupling pieces are pushed together into an assembled condition and thereafter it resiliently contracts for locking the coupling pieces together. The locking member can also be deformed to expand so that the coupling pieces can be separated from one another.

One of the coupling pieces includes a seal seat with a curved taper in independent claims 1, 5 and 6. By using a curved seal seat, a relatively large seal area can be provided in an ostomy coupling with a small profile height.

Independent claim 13 includes a channel portion in an ostomy coupling member that narrows with a curved taper towards the channel floor. This increases the sealing surface and enables a reduced profile height. The channel portion receives the second coupling part. This claim further includes a split ring locking member that expands when the ring is rotated. The locking member has locking projections that move outwardly from a wall of the ostomy coupling member so as to permit the coupling member to separate from the coupling part.

In independent claim 14 the claimed ostomy coupling member includes a flange with an upstanding annular wall. The ostomy coupling member further includes a split ring locking member mounted on an annular clearance in the annular wall having an inclined outer face to form a generally inclined profile shape. This provides a smooth gradual transition between the annular wall and peripheral region of the flange.

In independent claim 18, the split ring locking member includes first and second limbs and the locking ring is mounted on the radially projecting guide of the ostomy coupling member.

The references cited by the Examiner do not disclose or suggest the present invention as claimed in newly amended independent claims 1, 5, 6, 13, 14 and 18.

The Examiner cited Olsen in rejecting the former claims. Olsen was applied under 35 USC 102 and 103 when rejecting the claims as anticipated or obvious, respectively.

Olsen discloses a locking member that acts similarly to a detent locking system or belt (see Figure 5). The ends of the locking ring are a male locking unit 42 and that fits into the housing 49 of female unit 43 until a bead 47 engages with a window. This is the first locking position. When the male locking unit 42 is pushed completely into the housing unit the second bead 48 engages with the window 51 of the housing. (See column 8, lines 3-28.)

The present invention provides in each of the independent claims for a deformable split ring locking member that expands and resiliently contracts. This locking ring deforms so as to expand when pushing the two parts of the coupling together and resiliently contracts for locking the two parts together.

Olsen does not suggest or teach the deformable locking ring of the present invention as claimed in independent claims 1, 5, 6, 13, 14 and 18. Each of these claims includes other limitations such as the curved taper and/or seal seat of independent claims 1, 5, 6 and 13; the inclined annular wall of claim 14 and the locking ring with two limbs on the projecting guide of the ostomy coupling member of claim 18. These additional limitations further patentably distinguish these claims over the teachings of the cited reference.

The claims have also been amended to resolve the Examiner's rejection under 35 USC 112.

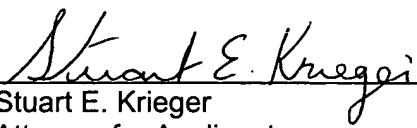
Enclosed are corrected informal drawings for the consideration of the Examiner.

The priority document is enclosed herewith.

Allowance of this application is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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